

DOD Mentoring Resource Portal

HOW TO FIND A MENTOR

Information for Supervisors Portfolio

HOW TO FIND AN EXPERIENCED SUPERVISOR MENTOR

Purpose:

To provide guidance to New Supervisors on how to find an Experienced Supervisor Mentor

Audience:

New Supervisors

Common Terms

The following are common terms associated with the DOD Mentoring Resource Portal:

Mentor, also known as Advisor, is a trusted counselor or guide who is involved in the development and support of one who is less experienced.

New Supervisor, also known as New Supervisor or Learner, is the more junior person being mentored.

Mentoring Program Coordinator, also known as Mentoring Program Manager, is responsible for the overall management of the Mentoring Program.

Information Source Disclaimer

Most of the information on this mentoring resource was obtained from the following sources: [Headquarters, Department of Army, DCS, G-1 ARMY MENTORSHIP HANDBOOK](#). All content is provided for informational purposes only.

1.0 HOW TO FIND AN EXPERIENCED SUPERVISOR MENTOR

First and foremost, Experienced Supervisors Mentors and New Supervisors should “**self-select**” each other. When looking for a Mentor, a person should spend a lot of time thinking about his or her mentoring needs and investigating possible Mentors. A good way to do this is by asking around to get feedback who might be an appropriate Experienced Supervisor Mentor for the individual. Good sources of information are first and second level supervisors, peers and others who know the individual and/or prospective Experienced Supervisor willing to serve in a mentoring role.

It is recommended that an Experienced Supervisor in a mentoring role be:

- Someone from beyond the chain of command
- About two grade levels above the individual
- Someone in your Career Field

The New Supervisor already has access to his or her chain of command on a routine basis and is encouraged to discuss personal, professional, and career goals and developmental needs with them on a regular basis. Because of this already existing access, the New Supervisor should look for someone else beyond the chain of command to serve as an Experienced Supervisor Mentor. Also, there may be, at times, reluctance on the part of the New Supervisor, to discuss some work related problems/challenges in a candid manner with those in the immediate chain of command. Additionally, sometimes direct mentoring relationships within the chain of command can easily and unintentionally create perceptions of favoritism, which should be avoided.

It is generally recommended that a Mentor not be more than two or three grades above a New Supervisor. A Mentor who is very senior to the New Supervisor may be too far removed to be able to provide practical guidance on how to get to the next step. Also, while many people would like to select senior leaders as Mentors, there usually just aren't enough to go around. Individuals looking for Experienced Supervisor Mentors should be mindful of this, and Experienced Supervisors asked to be Mentors should consider their own time limitations before committing to serve as a Mentor for more than one New Supervisor.

In looking for an Experienced Supervisor Mentor, consider personality types, communication styles and methods of communication, backgrounds (personal and professional), values, ethos, and experience. Know what you want from the relationship, based on your current situation, and think about the skills you'd like to develop and your career plans. Have realistic expectations: relationships may not last a lifetime, and most cannot fill every need because mentoring styles vary. Some important things to consider include (in no particular order):

1. What qualities are you seeking in a Mentor? If possible, state the relative importance of each quality.
2. What are your career goals and needs?
3. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
4. Which is the most serious weakness? Which presents the greatest skill gap?
5. Check your perceptions. How do others (supervisor, Mentor(s), colleagues) see your developmental needs?

6. Does the Experienced Supervisor have knowledge and experience in related areas, or even better, in many of these areas?
7. Is the Experienced Supervisor at the right grade level (i.e., two or three grade levels above, not too far up)?
8. Is the Experienced Supervisor good at what he/she does?
9. Is the Experienced Supervisor an achiever?
10. Is the Experienced Supervisor a good role model?
11. Is the Experienced Supervisor well respected?
12. Is the Experienced Supervisor supportive and respectful of others?
13. Does the Experienced Supervisor value the organization, enjoy the challenges, and understand its vision, mission, and values?
14. Will the Experienced Supervisor be available for uninterrupted, quality meetings?
15. Will you feel comfortable talking with the Experienced Supervisor honestly and do you trust him or her to keep your conversations between the two of you?
16. Will the Experienced Supervisor take a genuine interest in your development? Is he or she enthusiastic about mentoring?
17. Will the Experienced Supervisor give you honest feedback about yourself and your developmental needs?
18. Can the Experienced Supervisor help you look for opportunities to gain visibility/demonstrate your capabilities?
19. Will the Experienced Supervisor give you candid information about the organization and be willing to share knowledge, experience, insights?
20. Is the Experienced Supervisor a good teacher/coach/motivator?
21. What do other peers or New Supervisors say about the Experienced Supervisor, as a Mentor?
22. What are the Experienced Supervisor's expectations?
23. How well does the Experienced Supervisor emulate the organization Values and Ethos?
24. What would you say would be the best outcome(s) of working with an Experienced Supervisor?
25. What would your Experienced Supervisor need to know about you in order to provide the mentoring you are seeking?